MAIN CLAUSES & SENTENCE STRUCTURE

CEFR Level C1 — Advanced

English Language Worksheets | 4 Worksheets + Answer Key

Worksheet 1: Advanced Sentence Architecture

At C1, basic clause types are assumed. Focus: information structure and emphasis.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

Key structures at C1

Structure	Function & Notes	Example
cleft: it-cleft	Isolates one element for emphasis	“It was the auditor who raised the alarm.”
cleft: wh-cleft (pseudo)	Fronts the point; delays the payload	“What the report ignores is the cost.”
end-weight	Long, complex elements go last	“It is unclear whether the fund can meet its obligations.”
end-focus	New information falls at the end	“Into the silence stepped the chairman.”
fronting + inversion	Fronted negative/adverbial forces inversion	“Seldom has a policy failed so completely.”
periodic sentence	Main clause withheld to the close	“When the audit closed, and when the shares fell, he resigned.”
loose (cumulative) sentence	Main clause first, detail appended	“He resigned, quietly, without a statement, on a Friday.”
existential ‘there’ / dummy ‘it’	Postpones the real subject	“There remains a difficulty.” / “It matters that we act.”

PART A — **Complete the sentences**

Fill in each gap with an appropriate word or phrase. More than one answer may be possible.

1. _____ the treasurer, not the chair, who authorised the payment.
2. Seldom _____ an institution admitted error so promptly.
3. _____ the memorandum conceals is the scale of the loss.
4. _____ remains a question that nobody wishes to ask.
5. Into the chamber _____ the delegates, silent and grim.
6. _____ is now clear that the forecasts were fabricated.
7. Not only _____ the deadline missed; the budget was overspent.
8. _____ we discovered, only after the vote, was the conflict of interest.

PART B — **Error analysis**

Identify and correct the error in each sentence. Then note the rule violated.

1 “Never I have encountered such incompetence.”
Correction: _____
Rule: _____

2 “It was him who signed the contract.” (formal register)
Correction: _____
Rule: _____

3 “That the fund is insolvent is now beyond dispute and has been widely reported by every major outlet since the auditors resigned.” (end-weight)
Correction: _____
Rule: _____

4 “The committee met, the minutes were lost, nobody objected.”
Correction: _____
Rule: _____

Score: _____ / 20

Worksheet 2: Register, Rhythm & Cohesion

Parataxis and hypotaxis, and the syntax of formality.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — The register spectrum

Sentence architecture is itself a register marker. Study the tables.

Informal / plain	Neutral	Formal / academic
short clauses, ‘and’, ‘so’	mixed coordination	heavy subordination, nominalisation
He didn't come. We left.	He didn't come, so we left.	In his absence, the meeting was adjourned.
That's why it failed.	It failed because of the cost.	The failure is attributable to the cost.
dashes, fragments	commas, semicolons	colons, balanced clauses

Term	Definition & effect
parataxis	clauses placed side by side, equal rank — plain, urgent, cumulative
hypotaxis	clauses ranked by subordination — analytical, hierarchical
nominalisation	verb → noun (‘decide’ → ‘the decision’); dense, impersonal, agentless
end-weight	the heaviest constituent goes last, or the sentence topples

PART B — Register transformation

Rewrite each sentence in the register indicated.

1. The board decided to cut the budget. Staff were angry.
   → _____ *(formal, nominalised, one sentence)*

2. It is regrettable that a delay has occurred in the processing of your application.
   → _____ *(plain English, active)*

3. The auditor raised the alarm.
   → _____ *(it-cleft, emphasise the auditor)*

4. The report ignores the human cost.
   → _____ *(wh-cleft)*

PART C — Verdicts

Decide whether each sentence is (a) standard, (b) acceptable but marked/stylistic, or (c) a genuine error. Justify in one sentence.

1. “Rarely does one encounter such candour.”
   Verdict: (a)/(b)/(c) Justification: _____

2. “It is the principle, not the money, that concerns us.”
   Verdict: (a)/(b)/(c) Justification: _____

3	“That the scheme would fail was obvious to everyone who had read the costings carefully.” Verdict: (a)/(b)/(c) Justification: _____
4	“He came. He saw. He conquered.” Verdict: (a)/(b)/(c) Justification: _____
5	“Only after the vote we learned the truth.” Verdict: (a)/(b)/(c) Justification: _____

Score: _____ / 25

Worksheet 3: Academic Writing & Critical Analysis

How sentence architecture carries argument and conceals agency.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — **Analytical reading**

> *It is often said that clarity is a moral virtue in prose. What is less often observed is that syntax can conceal as efficiently as it reveals. Consider the passive nominalisation beloved of institutions: 'Errors were made in the assessment of risk.' No agent appears; no one decided anything; the error, having become a noun, simply occurred. Rarely is such a sentence untrue — that is precisely its utility. Compare the active alternative, in which a subject must be named, a verb must be tensed, and responsibility, once located, cannot be quietly mislaid. It is not that long sentences obscure and short ones clarify; it is that every choice of structure decides what the reader is permitted to notice.*

1. Identify FIVE structures and classify each (it-cleft, wh-cleft, inversion, nominalisation, passive, end-weight, parataxis).

_____

_____

_____

2. 'Errors were made in the assessment of risk.' Rewrite it actively, naming an agent. What is lost — and gained?

_____

_____

3. Analyse 'Rarely is such a sentence untrue — that is precisely its utility.'

_____

_____

4. Explain the effect of the two it-clefts in the final sentence.

_____

_____

PART B — **Sentence transformation**

Rewrite each sentence according to the instruction. Preserve the meaning.

1. Original: "The committee's failure to consult residents caused the dispute."
   Task: rewrite in plain, active English with two clauses.
   → _____

2. Original: "We learned the truth only after the vote."
   Task: front the adverbial and invert.
   → _____

3. Original: "The cost, not the principle, is what worries them."
   Task: rewrite as an it-cleft.
   → _____

4 Original: “That the minister misled Parliament is now established.”
Task: apply end-weight using dummy ‘it’.
→ _____

5 Original: “The fund cannot meet its obligations. This is clear.”
Task: combine using a wh-cleft.
→ _____

PART C — Guided essay paragraph

Write a paragraph of 120–150 words arguing ONE position below. Include at least FOUR distinct structures from Worksheets 1–2; keep the register formal-academic.

Position A: Institutional prose is deliberately structured to obscure responsibility.
Position B: Complex syntax reflects complex thought, not evasion.

My position: ___ A ___ B

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Word count: _____

Score: _____ / 30

Worksheet 4: Synthesis, Data Interpretation & Argumentation

Deploy sentence architecture to interpret evidence and rebut claims.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — **Interpreting complex data**

Study the table analysing the prose of five public bodies (higher passive % = more agentless constructions).

Body	Avg sentence length	Passive (%)	Nominalisations /100w	Readability (/100)
Ministry A	34	41	12	28
Agency B	19	14	4	62
Council C	27	33	9	41
Regulator D	41	48	15	22
Trust E	22	20	6	55

Write six analytical sentences using the data. Apply the constraints below.

1. [Use an it-cleft to emphasise one body.]

_____

_____

2. [Use a wh-cleft to front an observation.]

_____

_____

3. [Use a fronted negative adverbial with inversion.]

_____

_____

4. [Use existential ‘there’ or dummy ‘it’ with end-weight.]

_____

_____

5. [Use a periodic sentence (main clause last).]

_____

_____

6. [Acknowledge a limitation of the data, using nominalisation deliberately.]

_____

_____

PART B — **Adversarial comparison (debate format)**

Write a two-sentence counter-argument that concedes part of each claim but challenges it from another angle. Use formal register and at least one advanced structure per response.

1. Claim: “Regulator D's prose is simply the clearest evidence of institutional evasion in the dataset.”

Hint: consider whether technical subject matter might require density.

Counter-argument:

_____

2. Claim: “Agency B proves that plain English is always achievable: short sentences, few passives.”
Hint: consider what Agency B might not have to explain.

Counter-argument:

3. Claim: “Readability tracks sentence length alone; the other columns are noise.”
Hint: compare Council C and Trust E.

Counter-argument:

PART C — Extended writing task

Write a discursive essay introduction (180–220 words) on the proposition below. Use at least FIVE distinct structures from this unit (underline them). Maintain a formal-academic register; present the proposition, acknowledge its complexity, and signal your line of argument.

“A writer's syntax is an ethical choice, not merely a stylistic one.”

Word count: _____ Structures underlined: _____ / 5

Score: _____ / 35

ANSWER KEY & TEACHER NOTES

For teacher use only — C1 Level Worksheets

Main Clauses & Sentence Structure | English Language Worksheets

Worksheet 1 – Gap Fill

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
1	___ the treasurer, not the chair, who	It was (it-cleft)
2	Seldom ___ an institution admitted	has (inversion after fronted 'seldom')
3	___ the memorandum conceals	What (wh-cleft)
4	___ remains a question	There (existential)
5	Into the chamber ___ the delegates	filed / came / stepped (full inversion, end-focus)
6	___ is now clear that	It (dummy subject, end-weight)
7	Not only ___ the deadline missed	was (inversion after 'not only')
8	___ we discovered … was the conflict	What (wh-cleft)

Worksheet 1 – Error Analysis

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
1	Never I have encountered	Never have I encountered … — a fronted negative adverbial requires subject–auxiliary inversion
2	It was him who signed	It was he who signed the contract. — the cleft pronoun is the subject of 'who signed', so it takes the subject form
3	heavy subject	It is now beyond dispute that the fund is insolvent, and the matter has been widely reported … — end-weight: postpone the heavy clause with dummy 'it'
4	comma splice / parataxis	The committee met; the minutes were lost; nobody objected. (or: '… met, but the minutes were lost, and nobody objected.') — commas alone cannot join main clauses

Worksheet 2 – Parts B & C

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
B1	nominalised	The board's decision to cut the budget provoked anger among staff.
B2	plain English	We are sorry that we have delayed your application. / Sorry — we've delayed your application.
B3	it-cleft	It was the auditor who raised the alarm.
B4	wh-cleft	What the report ignores is the human cost.
C1	Rarely does one encounter	(a) Standard — correct inversion after a fronted negative adverbial
C2	It is the principle, not the money, that …	(a) Standard it-cleft with contrastive focus
C3	That the scheme would fail was obvious …	(b) Marked — grammatical, but a heavy fronted subject clause; 'It was obvious that …' respects end-weight
C4	He came. He saw. He conquered.	(b) Marked — deliberate parataxis/asyndeton for rhetorical force

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
C5	Only after the vote we learned	**(c) Error — a fronted 'only' adverbial forces inversion: 'Only after the vote did we learn …'**

Worksheet 3 – Part A (Passage Analysis)

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
Q1	Five structures + types	**'It is often said that …' (dummy it + end-weight, agentless); 'What is less often observed is …' (wh-cleft); 'Errors were made …' (agentless passive); 'the assessment of risk' / 'the error, having become a noun' (nominalisation); 'Rarely is such a sentence untrue' (inversion); 'It is not that …; it is that …' (paired it-clefts); 'No agent appears; no one decided anything' (parataxis)**
Q2	active rewrite	**e.g. 'The risk team misjudged the risk.' Lost: institutional neutrality and the diffusion of blame. Gained: an identifiable agent, a tensed verb, and locatable responsibility.**
Q3	'Rarely is such a sentence untrue …'	**The inversion raises the register and grants the concession formally; the dash then delivers the sting — truthfulness is precisely what makes the evasion usable. Litotes ('untrue' rather than 'false') sharpens the irony.**
Q4	the two it-clefts	**The parallel clefts ('It is not that …; it is that …') reject a false dichotomy and substitute the writer's thesis, giving it the weight of a corrected definition and the cadence of a verdict.**

Worksheet 3 – Part B (Transformations)

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
1	plain active	**The committee did not consult residents, and this caused the dispute.**
2	fronting + inversion	**Only after the vote did we learn the truth.**
3	it-cleft	**It is the cost, not the principle, that worries them.**
4	end-weight	**It is now established that the minister misled Parliament.**
5	wh-cleft	**What is clear is that the fund cannot meet its obligations.**

Worksheets 3–4: Extended & Creative Tasks — Rubric

Criterion	Descriptor	Marks
Structural range	Uses 4–5 distinct advanced structures accurately	0–4
Register	Consistently formal-academic; syntax matches purpose	0–3
Argumentation	Clear line of argument; structure serves the reasoning	0–3
Accuracy	No errors in inversion, cleft form, or punctuation	0–2
Coherence	Information structure controlled; end-focus respected	0–3

Worksheet 4 – Part A (Model sentences)

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
1	it-cleft	**It is Regulator D, not Ministry A, that produces the least readable prose.**

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
2	wh-cleft	**What the readability column reveals is an almost perfect inverse relation to sentence length.**
3	inversion	**Nowhere in the dataset does a high passive rate coincide with high readability.**
4	existential / end-weight	**There remains a possibility that technical subject matter, rather than evasion, explains Regulator D's density.**
5	periodic	**Although Agency B writes shortest, and although its passive rate is lowest, only its readability score proves the point.**
6	nominalisation	**The measurement of readability is itself a simplification: the exclusion of subject matter from the model limits any conclusion drawn from it.**